

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Isaac Herzog of Israel
October 26, 2022

President Biden. I warned the Israeli press about how you guys come in with your boom mikes, so they—they're all ready for you.

President Herzog. They're not any easier, Mr. President, in Israel either. [*Laughter*]

President Biden. Anyway, Mr. President, welcome. It's great to have you here in the Oval Office. And you know, I want to thank you for your hospitality you showed me when I was in Israel. And thank you again for the honor you showed me.

I was bragging to the President: I have presented—been presented by the President the Israeli Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is on the table behind you over there. And I'm very proud of it. And—but thank you for that honor.

And tomorrow Israel and Lebanon are going to sign an agreement to establish a permanent—a permanent—maritime boundary between your two countries. I think it's a historic breakthrough. It took a lot of courage for you to step up and step into it. It took some real guts. And I think it took principled and persistent diplomacy to get it done, and I compliment you, and I compliment the Government.

This agreement is going to allow the development of energy fields in—for both countries. And it's going to create new hope and economic opportunities for the people of Lebanon and enhance the stability and security of the people of Israel, in my view.

I've been—as you probably know, I've been working on this since I was Vice President of the United States, and I really compliment you.

We're also going to discuss the ironclad commitment—and this is—I'll say this 5,000 times in my career—the ironclad commitment the United States has to Israel based on our principles, our ideas, our values. They're the same values.

And I've often said, Mr. President, if there were—if there were not an Israel, we'd have to invent one. [*Laughter*]

President Herzog. Thank you.

President Biden. And I've told you before: My dad was a righteous Christian who—we used to sit for dinner to have conversation and incidentally eat. And I remember, even when I was a teenager, my dad talking about how we should have done so much more. "Why didn't we bomb the railroad tracks? Why didn't we"—and so on.

President Herzog. In World War II.

President Biden. In World War II.

And so it's a deep, shared concern. And so we have bedrock values and interests, and I'm going to—hope we get to talk about those a little bit today. And I think our interests are pretty consistent around the world and in the region.

So thank you for being here.

President Herzog. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to thank you wholeheartedly for your hospitality, for inviting me here. It's an expression of true friendship. And we had the enormous pleasure of hosting you at the President's home and in Israel at large a few weeks ago. It was a

true moment of pleasure for the people of Israel. And I also think it was one hell of a pleasure for you too, as far as I could get it.

President Biden. It was.

President Herzog. You are a true friend of Israel, Mr. President, and the United States is our closest, strongest historical ally. And I'm very proud to come here as the head of state of the State of Israel to express my feelings of friendship and bonding and the unbreakable bond between our nations.

You know, Mr. President, today marks 40 days to the killing of Mahsa, a young Iranian woman who protested. And today the Iranian regime is crushing thousands of Iranian citizens—men—young men and women—who are demonstrating and simply pleading to have their own liberties.

And this is an example of the way Iran is working: crushing its own citizens, moving towards nuclear weapons, and supplying lethal weapons that are killing innocent citizens in Ukraine. And I think the Iranian challenge will be a major challenge, as—which we will be discussing.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, and the administration for moving forward and carving the deal between Israel and Lebanon on the maritime borders. And we appreciate the effort and, of course, the bringing it to fruition tomorrow.

We will also be discussing the inclusion and integration of Israel in the region, in the Middle East, as we see more and more nations coming onboard and cooperating with Israel in so many fields.

For one item that you and I will participate, together with leaders from all over the world, in the COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt a few weeks down the road—I think the climate change challenge can serve as a common denominator for so many nations, and also between Israel and the United States.

And finally, Mr. President, you know, we have elections in Israel, and you're having midterm elections in the United States. But one thing is clear—and I think this visit epitomizes it best—is that our friendship and strong bond transcends all political differences and opinions and parties.

And I hope that together we can continue to work towards the well-being of the State of Israel, the United States, and the world at large. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:53 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, President Herzog referred to Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish Iranian woman who died in police custody on September 16 following her arrest in Tehran, Iran, for allegedly violating Iran's dress code.

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